



# A HARLOT GOD HATH DESIRED

St. John Chrysostom

Translated by Father Panteleimon  
For the Holy Nativity Convent in 1983



HOLY ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF BOSTON

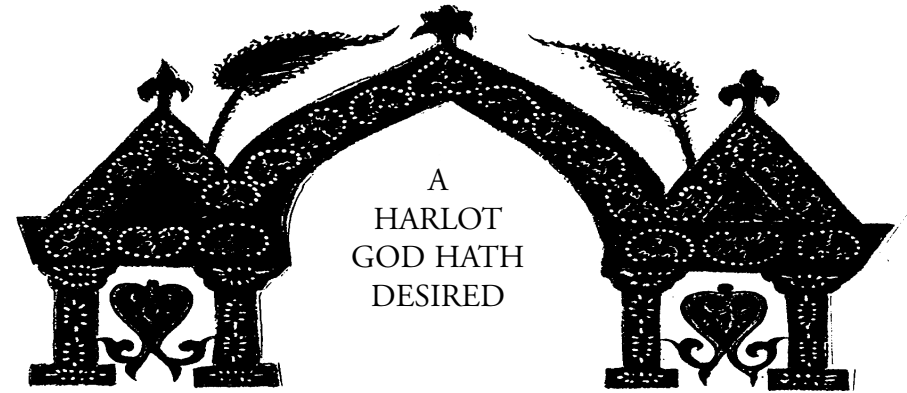
1476 Centre Street  
Roslindale, Massachusetts 02131-1417  
Tel: 617.323.6379 - Fax: 617.323.3861  
Web Site: <http://www.homb.org>

HOLY ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF BOSTON

Copyright ©2010 by the Holy Orthodox Church in North America  
Boston, Massachusetts 02131  
All rights reserved  
Printed in the United States of America

**Π**ότε τῇ πόρτῃ, Ἀγαθέ,  
 ἀνομήσῃ, δακρύων ὄμβρους  
 ἰσομῶς θι προσῆξα· ἀλλὰ σὺν  
 δόμοις προσπίπτω θι πόδι  
 ἁσπαζόμενος τῶν ἀχράντων θυ πόδι,  
 ὅπως μοι τῇ ἀφύπνῃ, ὡς Ἀποστόλῃς,  
 παρὰ τῆς τῶν ὀφλημάτων κλάσιν  
 ᾤσῃ· ἔνθ' ἐρεβόρα τῶν ἑσπέρων ἡ εὐσχήμη.

**Η** πόρτη ἐν κλειδίῳ ἀνοίξα,  
 οἰκτιρῶν, ὁκμαίνουσα ὑπερῶς  
 τῶν ἀχράντων θυ πόδι, θυξί  
 τῆς κτεράλης αὐτῆς ἡ βλάβος ἡ ἀνά-  
 ζουσα· μὴ ἀποώσῃ με μηδὲ βδελύξῃ,  
 ὅτι ἐγώ, ἀλλὰ δεῖξαι με μετανοήσαντα  
 ἡ σωσὸν, ὡς φιλανθρωπία



St. John Chrysostom

Translated by Father Panteleimon  
 For the Holy Nativity Convent in 1983

A HARLOT hath God desired? Yea, a harlot—I mean our own nature. He was exalted and she was base—exalted not in place but in nature. Immaculate He was, indestructible in essence, incorruptible in nature, incomprehensible, invisible, beyond grasp, ever existing, eternally the same, surpassing angels, above the hosts on high: conquering all thought, transcending understanding, invisible to sight, only to be believed in. Angels beheld and trembled, the Cherubim covered themselves with their wings, all stood in fear. He looketh upon the earth and maketh it tremble; He rebuketh the sea and it drieth up; He maketh rivers to spring forth in the desert; He hath set the mountains in a measure and the valleys in a balance. How to speak of it? How to relate it? His majesty hath no end, His wisdom is immeasurable, His judgments are unfathomable, His paths unsearchable.

Yet this One Who is so great and of such magnitude desired a harlot. Why so? That He might refashion the harlot into a virgin. That He might become her bridegroom.

What doeth He? He sends not unto her any one of His servants,

He sends not an angel to the harlot, not an Archangel, not the Cherubim, not the Seraphim, but He Himself cometh, Who is in love.

He desireth a harlot. And what doeth He? Because she was not able to ascend above, He descended below. He comes to her hut; He beholds her drunk. And how doth He come? Not just in His essence, naked God, but He becomes even as is the harlot, that in seeing Him she might not be terrified, might not run away, might not escape. He finds her covered with sores, ravening wild, burdened by demons. And what doeth He? He takes her and unites Himself to her. And what giveth He to her? A ring. Which? The Holy Spirit.

Thereafter He saith, Did I not plant thee in a garden?

She saith, Yea.

And how did you fall away from thence?

The devil came and took me out of the garden.

Thou wast planted in paradise and he put thee out. Behold, I shall plant thee in Myself. He dare not draw nigh to Me. The shepherd standeth guard and the wolf cometh no more.

But I am a sinner, saith she, and impure.

Let not that be thy concern, for I am a physician.

Give heed with attention: see what He doeth. He came to receive the harlot, I say, even as she was, unclean, that thou mightest come to know the love of the bridegroom. This is the property of him that loveth, that He does not require accountability for sins, but rather forgives iniquitous transgressions.

She was formerly a daughter of demons, a daughter of the earth, unworthy of the earth. And now she hath become a daughter of the King. This is the desire of Him that loveth her. For he who is enamored doth not examine actions. Love seeth not uncomeliness: for this reason is it called love, in that oftentimes it loves even that which is uncomely. On this wise did Christ do also: He beheld her who is

uncomely and fell in love with her and makes her young again.

He took her as wife, and loves her as a daughter, and provides for her as a handmaiden, and keeps her as a virgin, and encloses her as a garden, and attends unto her as a member of His own body. Being her head He provides for her, and as the root He plants, and as the shepherd He pastures. As the bridegroom He takes her unto Himself, and as the Mercy Seat He forgives, and as the Lamb He sacrifices, and as the bridegroom He preserveth her in beauty, and as a husband He hath solicitude for her.

O Bridegroom, Who makes beautiful the uncomeliness of the bride!

HOMILY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM  
(Selection from PG 52. 404<sup>a</sup>-411<sup>b</sup>)